

March 30, 2022

FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

**SB 485: AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS OPERATED BY THE CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL**

**TESTIMONY from Wanda Vargas Hartford, CT**

Senator Fonfara, Representative Scanlon, Honorable Ranking Members, and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee.

My name is Wanda Vargas and I live in Hartford. I have a son and a daughter who attend Ana Grace Academy of the Arts in Bloomfield, which is a CREC Magnet School. **Thank you for raising SB 485 to support CREC in implementing capital improvements for our schools. I am asking you to please support this much needed funding and planning mechanism for CREC.**

My children benefit greatly because they attend a CREC Magnet School. As a Hartford resident, I wanted my children to attend a school that would challenge them academically, while also incorporating the things they love: The ARTS!!! As a parent, I want nothing but the best for my children. I graduated from Hartford Public Schools and I wanted something better for my children. I am proud to have graduated a Bulkeley Bulldog, but while I was attending, I played on the girls' basketball team and when we traveled to other schools and saw how nice their facilities were, I always wondered why Hartford schools didn't look like that. Our children are entitled to have quality education as well as up to date facilities. It's not fair that other districts can rely on their town. Some of our CREC schools have been going strong for more than 20 years providing quality education to children across Hartford County and they should continue to do so.

The state made a commitment to these schools through Sheff v O'Neill. Our kid's education should not suffer, because the state is not fulfilling its commitment to maintain these critical schools that support integration and build students to successfully live in a global community.

Currently, five of the 18 CREC-operated magnet schools are over 20 years old and five of them need repairs as soon as next year. We need you to support SB 485, which provides the much needed funding for capital improvements for these aging schools. **Please support SB 485 and create this important mechanism to cover CREC's capital improvements.**